

HEALTH ALERT: The Heidelberg area is a high risk zone for tick bites, according to the Federal and Baden-Württemberg public health authorities. Bites increase one's risk for contracting tick-borne encephalitis. Approximately 70% percent of the infections go unnoticed, but there is a small risk of fatal complications.

Prevention Measures:

- **Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, hats, socks and shoes** that prevent insects from reaching your skin while walking in the woods, or among tall grasses.
- **Use insect repellents that contain DEET (diethylmethylnitrobenzyltoluamide).** Carefully read and follow the directions and precautions on the product label.
 - **Apply insect repellent to exposed skin.** Children under 10 years old should not apply insect repellent themselves. Do not apply to young children's hands or around eyes and mouth. Never put repellent on wounds or broken skin.
 - **Do not breathe in, swallow, or get into the eyes or mouth** (DEET is toxic if swallowed). When using a spray product, apply DEET to your face by spraying your hands and rubbing the product carefully over the face, avoiding eyes and mouth.
 - **DEET may be used on adults, children, and infants older than 2 months of age.**
- **After possible exposure, check carefully for ticks.** Use the buddy system. When you come indoors, remove your clothes and check your skin and hair carefully. You can place your clothes in a hot dryer for 20 minutes to ensure that any ticks you failed to notice will be killed. Check children and pets carefully.

To see what a tick looks like, visit <http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/news/tickbornediseases.asp>.

- **If you find a tick**, pinch its head rather than its body, and slowly pull it straight out. Do not scratch or cut them out or pull sharply. Our veterinarians have special tweezers available for extracting ticks.
- **After removing the tick**, wash the affected area with soap and water, and watch for signs of swelling. If the bite area reddens and spreads, seek medical attention immediately. Diseases carried by ticks can be stopped with early treatment.
- **For additional questions or concerns, please call the Community Health Nurse at 348-7532. For complete information** on tick borne diseases, visit the Center for Disease Control website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel/diseases/tickenceph.htm>.
- **Contact your health care provider immediately if a tick bite is followed by a skin rash or "flu-like" symptoms OR if you are unsure of a tick bite and suspect infection.**